NOVA SCOTIA

Human Rights Commission

2013 - 2014 French-Language Services Plan

Submitted July 2013

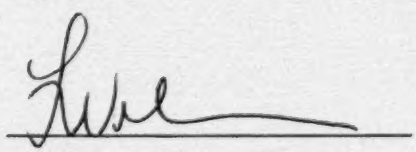
Message from the Director & CEO

It is my pleasure to submit the 2013-2014 French-language Services Plan for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. The Commission remains committed to fulfilling the Government's obligations pursuant to the *French-Language Services Act* and Regulations.

Members of Nova Scotia's Acadian and Francophone communities make significant contributions to the business, cultural, political and academic life of the province. These citizens work, live and play in our cities and towns. It is important that French speaking Nova Scotians can access the important protections offered by the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*, so they can continue their important contributions to our province, and our country.

The Commission has already expanded its capacity to provide critical services in French, and we intend to continue to improve the quality and quantity of services and information available to members of the Acadian and Francophone community.

New opportunities to improve services for Acadian and Francophone Nova Scotians will be sought, and efforts will continue to ensure the human rights of all citizens are protected.



Tracey L. Williams
Director & CEO

Responses to French Requests (Written and Oral)

Inquiry / Intake Services

The Human Rights Commission responds to phone inquiries and provides information to the public on human rights issues mainly through its phone service in the Halifax office, through distribution of print material and the website. Staff are directed to provide service in French, or make available service in French, to all callers and walk-in clients who request or need service in French. Our intake team can communicate in French both orally and in writing. This unit is assisted by other staff and students from the Commission who refer clients to French speaking staff as necessary.

Written Correspondence

All written correspondence in French received by the Commission is replied to in French. Complex documents may be sent for translation, but Commission staff have the capacity to perform most of their regular duties and prepare most of their correspondence in French.

Investigation / Mediation

Complaint investigation and mediation is a highly technical process that requires knowledge of and the ability to describe investigation techniques, legal theory and Commission policies. French speaking clients have been served in French throughout the year, and capacity will continue to be expanded through French language training and targeted recruitment.

Training / Public Events / Media

Training and public events are generally conducted in English. Promotional material for public events, such as posters and brochures, are distributed in French.

One Commissioner has French as a first language and is available to conduct public speaking engagements in French. Several Senior Managers have B Level French capacity. Media releases involving Board of Inquiry decisions or other matters of relevance are distributed in French.

Nova Scotia is hosting the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies (CASHRA) annual national human rights conference in May 2013. The web content for this conference is in English and French, and French translation will be available during the conference.

Results from significant research project in the area of Consumer Racial Profiling will be released in 2013. Key findings will be made available in both French and English.

French-Language Service Inventory

The Commission currently employs 23 people and operates provincially with three offices: a central office in Halifax and regional offices in Sydney and Digby. The Commission constantly strives to increase the capacity of its staff to provide services in French.

Currently 11 Commissioners, serving on a part-time basis, come from diverse backgrounds and from different regions of the province. In addition, Board of Inquiry Panel Chairs make decisions on human rights cases.

There are a number of staff who can communicate in French and competency levels vary. Two Human Rights Officers working with Inquiry/Intake service are functionally bilingual, and two Managers can also speak French.

The Commission has a number of brochures available in French.

French-Language Services Coordinator

Gerald Hashey, Manager of Dispute Resolution

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Table 1 - Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2012-2013

Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2012-2013

Human Rights Commission

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2012-2013	Planned Measures – 2012-2013	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2012-2013
Objective 1 – Framework and Policy Strengthen the policy, regulatory, and administrative framework in support of the French-language Services Act	**1.1 – Administrative and Policy Framework** The Office of Acadian Affairs and the Minister of Acadian Affairs fulfill their obligations pursuant to the French-language Services Act			

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2012-2013	Planned Measures – 2012-2013	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2012-2013
	and Regulations.			
	1.2 – Institutional Responsibilities Designated public institutions better fulfill their obligations pursuant to the French-language Services Act and Regulations.	Continue to meet responsibilities by participation in French language services coordinating committee. Submit progress report.	An effective transferring of responsibilities from outgoing CEO to manager. Participate on committee. Progress report is filed on time.	- Manager of Dispute Resolution serves as French Language Services Coordinator for the Commission. Progress report is prepared.
Objective 2 – Enabling French-language Services Consult, plan, develop, and deliver French-language services in priority areas	**2.1 – Consultations** Designated public institutions deliver services that better respond to the priority needs of the Acadian and francophone community as identified through consultation.	When changing processes/systems, consult with community as required.	Community is aware of changes within the Commission and are able to provide feedback.	Inquiry line staff are able to communicate in French. Client feedback on Commission processes and changes can be provided in French.
	2.2 – Internal Communications Public service employees are more knowledgeable about the approach being taken by the government to provide French-language services. They are more sensitive to cultural issues pertaining to the Acadian and francophone community and more aware of the requirements to communicate in French; they promote services in French to the public.	Management team continues to use French and to promote its usage throughout the organization.	French speaking staff members are used as a resource by managers and staff when necessary. Commission Senior Management Team reviews the French-language Services Act and Regulations.	French speaking staff regularly support colleagues who receive French communication from clients. Communication from the Office of Acadian Affairs on French language services is circulated among staff as appropriate. Managers reviewed the French –language Services Act and Regulations. Cultural competence training was delivered to Commission staff by

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2012-2013	Planned Measures – 2012-2013	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2012-2013
				academic experts.
	2.3 – Communications with the Public Key stakeholders and the community better understand the approach being taken by the government to provide French-language services and they are more aware of the programs and services available to them.	Bilingual web site launched.	Core elements of the Commission's website are available in French.	The CASHRA conference website is available in French and English. Advice is being sought on preparing a static French version of the Commission website. Web content is self-managed on an ongoing basis, so capacity does not exist to regularly update a French version.
	2.4 – Service Delivery Services in French considered as priorities are identified, strategies or approaches for service delivery are implemented, and services are offered.	When the next Board Chair roster is prepared, an emphasis will be placed on recruiting Chairs who can function in French. Staff with French capacity receive training to deliver all aspects of the Dispute Resolution Program in French.	Qualified lawyers are identified for contact when recruitment for the Board Chair roster takes place. Dispute Resolution unit staff can mediate and investigate files in French.	The roster has not yet been updated. Staff in the Dispute Resolution unit can investigate and mediate files in French.
	2.5 – Human Resources The capacity of the Public Service to provide services in French has increased.	Continue to improve capacity.	Staff continue to take courses and attend lunch and learns. Staffing of new positions takes into consideration the language of the position.	Two Commission staff registered for French language training. French courses continued to be offered to staff.
Objective 3 – Community Development and	**3.1 – Preservation and Growth of the Community**	N/A	N/A	N/A

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2012-2013	Planned Measures – 2012-2013	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2012-2013
Capacity-Building Support the Acadian and francophone community in its long-term development and sustainability	Government has helped Acadian and francophone community organizations realize objectives expressed in the community's Comprehensive Development Plan 2009-2014.			
	3.2 – School Community Centres Acadian and francophone school community centres offer services and programs to the Acadian and francophone community.	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 2 – Goals, Objectives and Measures for 2013-2014

Goals, Objectives, and Measures for 2013-2014

Human Rights Commission

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2013-2014	Planned Measures – 2013-2014
Objective 1 – Framework and Policy Strengthen the policy, regulatory, and administrative framework in support of the French-language Services Act	**1.1 – Administrative and Policy Framework** The Office of Acadian Affairs and the Minister of Acadian Affairs fulfill their obligations pursuant to the French-language Services Act and Regulations.		
	1.2 – Institutional Responsibilities Designated public institutions better fulfill their obligations pursuant to the French-language Services Act and Regulations.	Continue to meet responsibilities by increasing familiarity with the obligations under the Act and Regulations. Submit progress report.	French-language Services Act is posted on employee notice board for ease of access. Progress report is filed on time.
Objective 2 – Enabling French-language Services Consult, plan, develop, and deliver French-language services in priority areas	**2.1 – Consultations** Designated public institutions deliver services that better respond to the priority needs of the Acadian and francophone community as identified through consultation.	Hold a Commission meeting in a French-speaking community to raise awareness of the Commission and its work.	Notable public awareness of the Commission meeting, possibly through news reports or word of mouth.
	2.2 – Internal Communications Public service employees are more knowledgeable about the approach being taken by the government	Management team continues to use French and to promote its usage throughout the organization.	French speaking staff members are used as a resource by managers and staff when necessary. Communication from the Office of Acadian Affairs is

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2013-2014	Planned Measures – 2013-2014
	to provide French-language services. They are more sensitive to cultural issues pertaining to the Acadian and francophone community and more aware of the requirements to communicate in French; they promote services in French to the public.		available to staff as appropriate.
	2.3 – Communications with the Public Key stakeholders and the community better understand the approach being taken by the government to provide French-language services and they are more aware of the programs and services available to them.	Consumer Racial Profiling Project results are released in English and French. Web site content is selected for translation and publication in French.	Executive Summary is translated into French and made available on the web site. French content increased on the NSHRC web site.
	2.4 – Service Delivery Services in French considered as priorities are identified, strategies or approaches for service delivery are implemented, and services are offered.	When the next Board Chair roster is prepared, an emphasis will be placed on recruiting Chairs who can function in French. Staff with French capacity receive training to deliver all aspects of the Dispute Resolution program in French.	Qualified lawyers are identified for contact when recruitment for the Board Chair roster takes place. Dispute Resolution unit staff can mediate and investigate files in French.
	2.5 – Human Resources The capacity of the Public Service to provide services in French has increased.	Continue to improve capacity.	Staff continue to take courses and attend lunch and learns. Staffing of new positions takes into consideration the language of the position. A priority is placed on bilingualism on the inquiry line.
Objective 3 – Community Development and Capacity-Building Support the Acadian and francophone community in	**3.1 – Preservation and Growth of the Community** Government has helped	N/A	N/A

Objectives	Expected Results: 2009-2013 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Department Goals and Objectives – 2013-2014	Planned Measures – 2013-2014
its long-term development and sustainability	Acadian and francophone community organizations realize objectives expressed in the community's Comprehensive Development Plan 2009-2014.		
	3.2 – Agencies, Boards and Commissions Acadians and Francophones will be encouraged to become members of or will be represented on the agencies, boards and commissions managed by your organization.	The Executive Council has the primary responsibility for recruiting members of the public to government agencies, boards and commissions, and regularly advertises current opportunities, in both French and English. For more information visit www.gov.ns.ca/exec_council/abc.	N/A

Priorities of the Acadian and Francophone Community

Interactions with members of the Acadian and Francophone community are usually issues-based. Therefore, staff are able to immediately respond to expressed needs or interests of members of this community. The primary interest expressed is often the desire to interact with the Commission in French. In every instance in 2012/13 and expected for 2013/14, this priority has been or will be met.

Contribution to the Preservation and Grown of the Acadian and Francophone Community

The actions and initiatives identified in the NSHRC's French-language services plan will contribute to the preservation and growth of the Acadian and Francophone community by

ensuring they have convenient access to human rights information and protections. The very mandate of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission supports the idea of helping the Acadian and Francophone communities flourish. Individuals who need the support of the NSHRC to ensure they receive fair and equal treatment in their communities, at work and in other situations are able to access that support in their own language.